



MI NETS



STATES



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Michigan NETS talk

Michigan Network of Employers for Traffic Safety

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Winter 1999

Third Annual National Drive Safely at Work Week



The Michigan Network of Employers for Traffic Safety has designated April 26-30, 1999 as the third annual National Drive Safely at Work Week (NDSAWW)-a traffic safety campaign for the workplace. Throughout the week, five major traffic safety issues are addressed: occupant protection; road rage and aggressive driving; sharing the road safely with trucks and other large vehicles; impaired driving, and a new issue for 1999, the cause in as many of 90% of traffic crashes-driver inattention.

Every leader within an organization is looking for ways to reduce costs and increase productivity. But how many realize they can do this by addressing safe driving behavior? **The fact is traffic crashes cost employers an average of \$9,716 for each occurrence and are the leading cause of work-related injury and death.** In addition to the economic impact of traffic crashes, the personal tragedy to employees and employers is staggering-especially considering most traffic crashes are preventable.

We've taken the opportunity to notify you early of the campaign dates so you can work NDSAWW into your planning for 1999. We'll be sending you more information in the near future regarding how you can obtain everything you need to launch a successful campaign.



Stay Alive-Make the Connection!

The Office of Highway Safety Planning (OHSP) and Michigan NETS want to ensure that no one is

injured or killed in a tragedy that could have been prevented by the use of safety equipment—belts, child restraint systems, bicycle helmets or motorcycle helmets. Publicizing crashes where the use of safety equipment prevented serious injury or loss of life will go a long way toward educating your co-workers, friends, and neighbors about safe practices.

Make The Connection is a new program that gives employers the opportunity to recognize employees and their families involved in traffic crashes who were protected by using a safety belt or child safety seat, wearing a bicycle or motorcycle helmet, or deployment of an airbag.

After a short application is completed and submitted to the Michigan Resource Center, the applicant will receive a certificate and a token gift. Anyone under age 8 will receive a sip-a-mug. A glow in the dark yo-yo will be presented to those aged 8-14. A press-a-lite key chain will be given to those aged 15-20. Those adults over age 20 will receive a white travel mug. All of the token gifts will have the Make the Connection logo imprinted on its face.

To take advantage of this unique opportunity, please contact the Michigan Resource Center (MRC) for an application to **Make The Connection**. MRC can be contacted by calling toll free, 1-800-626-4636. For more information, contact Pat Eliason, OHSP's Occupant Protection Coordinator at (517) 333-5318 or Dan Vartanian, Michigan NETS Coordinator at (517) 333-5322. Efforts to mobilize these **connections** will make your place of business and your community a safer place to live.

Construction Industry Forms Partnership with Safety Groups

The American Road and Transportation Builders Association (ARTBA) has announced partnerships with the National Safety Council and the Network of Employers for Traffic Safety (NETS) to help increase work zone safety.



More than 700 people are killed and 37,000 are injured in roadway construction zones each year. Substantial federal increases in funds for road improvements means hundreds of new construction sites over the next few years, potentially placing motorists and construction workers at greater risk.

In addition to partnering with the National Safety Council, the ARTBA also pledged to work with the Network of Employers for Traffic Safety to educate the public on safe driving practices in work zone sites and increase awareness and use of the National Work Zone Safety Information Clearinghouse.

"With the increase in road construction, it will become increasingly important to educate drivers on safety in work zones," said Tom Walsh, corporate safety and health manager, United Parcel Service and chairman of NETS. "ARTBA's traffic safety industry division provides a wealth of knowledge and experience that NETS can leverage to improve our employer-traffic safety management practices, education, and awareness programs."



Check your Calendar. May 11-12, 1999

The 4th Annual Michigan Traffic Safety Summit will be held May 11-12, 1999, at the Hyatt Regency, Dearborn, Michigan. The Traffic Safety Summit is sponsored by the Michigan Traffic Safety Management Steering Committee and the Michigan State Safety Commission. Traffic safety advocates throughout the state will be gathering at this central location to create new and improved traffic safety partnerships. The fourth annual summit will be a reflection of new and emerging issues as well as innovative ways to increase safety belt use and address the impaired driving problem. As an added bonus, this year's conference will be held jointly with Intelligent Transportation Society of Michigan (ITS). ITS will be conducting a one day conference on May 11, 1999. There will also be approximately 50 exhibitors with traffic-safety related products and materials. If you would like an invitation to attend this conference or display, please contact: Sandy Brown at the Office of Highway Safety Planning after March 1, 1999 by calling (527) 333-5301.

Get the Facts About Substance Abuse

They drive trucks, operate on patients, fix cars, teach school children, type letters, cook and serve meals-and more than likely-they work for you.

More than 70 percent of all substance abusers are employed, according to the Institute for a Drug-Free Workplace in Washington, D.C. They often look and act no differently from other people in the workforce.

But drug and alcohol abuse in the workplace puts the safety, health and welfare of the entire workforce at risk, says Daryl Grecich, director of communications for the Institute for a Drug-Free Workplace. One person abusing drugs and alcohol can have a profound effect on all others by contributing to injuries, violence, equipment destruction, product defects, employee morals and productivity.

Recognize the signs

Supervisors should receive training to help them spot substance abuse. "In the workplace...you should begin to suspect (substance abuse) if employees change their habits, start coming in late and their work habits get sloppy," says Dr. Herbert S. Peyser, psychiatrist, St. Luke's Roosevelt Hospital Center in New York City. "They could be depressed or they could be having trouble at home, but they also could be taking drugs," he says.

Substance abuse symptoms include stuffy noses and red eyes. Employees can mask symptoms with long sleeves to cover up needle marks for those who inject drugs, and breath mints or mouthwash to mask the smell of alcohol. Another clue: Employees may minimize their dependency with statements like, "I only had one little drink." "Like a rickety ladder or slippery spill, employers may be held liable for failing to correct the hazardous condition presented by substance abusers," says New York City labor attorney Lee Scham. "Unlike the rickety ladder, however, a substance abuser may have his or her own rights to assert. But the rights of all addicts are different."

Workers with addictions have rights

The Americans with Disabilities Act draws a sharp distinction between alcohol and drug addictions. "Drug addiction is not a covered disability under the ADA whereas alcoholism is," Seham says. "Consequently, supervisors should only discipline alcoholic employees for performance-related problems, that is, absenteeism, tardiness, lack of productivity, rather than their mere status as an alcoholic." He adds that there is no restriction on disciplining an employee who comes to work under the influence.

"But employers...have an obligation to combat substance abuse in the workplace," Grecich says. "People have a right to work in a healthy and safe environment. Most employees aren't substance abusers, and they don't want to work with substance abusers because of all the associated problems," he says.

What could a supervisor do? Contact the person designated by your company, such as a representative of your employee assistance program, to advise you about confronting an employee who has problems with alcohol or drugs, according to the Minnesota-based Hazelden Foundation. Peyser warns that specialists must address both the employee's addiction and its underlying cause. He advises supervisors to contact the American Psychiatric Association for referrals.

To avoid charges of supervisory abuse of discretion, supervisors should initiate drug and/or alcohol testing only if they have reasonable proof to suspect substance abuse, says Seham. "Supervisors responsible for initiating reasonable cause testing should receive training in detecting such behavioral cues," he says. "Specimen collection should be performed by trained professionals."

"Both drug and alcohol abusers may receive protection under the Family/Medical Leave Act if they request leave to treat their serious health condition prior to engaging in unprotected misconduct," Seham says.

Many employees can work during treatment. "It would be a question of how they're doing in treatment, how far along they are, and what their job is," Peyser says. "It's one thing if their job is cleaning a building. It's another thing if they're an airplane pilot. But if they're clean and dry, even a surgeon could go back to work but must be monitored because of the dangers to others."

Source: Today's Supervisor, Sept.99, National Safety Council

Winter Safe Driving Tips

There are almost as many opinions as to how to drive safely on ice or snow as there are automobiles. Most crashes occur when you don't expect the surface of the road to be slippery.

Many people get into trouble by assuming the roads will not be slippery unless the temperature is freezing or below. Ice can form on road surfaces, however, anytime the air temperature drops to 40 degrees or less, especially when it is windy. Bridges and underpasses can be especially hazardous, but these are not the only locations where "black ice" can form. Any low or shaded area, area surrounded by landscape or area that has a source of water running over the pavement can also be quick to form ice. Early morning hours are especially dangerous, as the moisture has had an opportunity to sit on the cold pavement and freeze.

Others find themselves in trouble during the winter while driving on roads seemingly clear or only slightly wet, and then trying to stop at an intersection only to discover that it is ice-covered and slippery. This is caused by the moisture emitting from the exhaust of cars waiting at a busy intersection and quickly freezing on the pavement. Always approach intersections cautiously.

Slow down and be alert for other vehicles around you that may lose control, and allow at least 4 seconds between vehicles. Michigan State Police Troopers recommend you allow no less than a car-length in front of you when you are stopped behind another vehicle at a slippery intersection, and then watch your rear-view mirror for cars that may be approaching too fast from behind.

The most important concept to remember when braking in snow and ice, as well as dry roads, is **not** to lock up the wheels. Once the tires are in a skid, you are no longer able to steer the vehicle. Threshold braking is the key to avoiding brake lock up. You can learn to develop your braking skills with practice. Learn to apply the brakes by squeezing them to the point when they are just about to lock up, then ease off just enough to prevent the lock up from occurring. You then achieve maximum braking efficiency to come to a quick stop while maintaining full steering ability.

If your car is equipped with antilock brakes (ABS), it will do most of the work for you. Use firm, steady pressure on the brake pedal **without** pumping. The grinding noise you hear and the surging you feel in the pedal is normal and indicates the brakes are working properly, allowing you to continue to steer and control the vehicle. And for you 4-wheel-drive enthusiasts, always remember that a 4-wheel-drive vehicle provides additional traction that is useful for going through deep snow, but it **does not** stop any faster.

Use caution this winter and always plan ahead. Keep your eyes on the road, be alert, and never drink and drive. Your best protection to avoid serious injury and death is to **always** wear your safety belt. Don't ever fall in the trap with a false sense of security with cars equipped with air bags. Safety belts must still be worn to gain maximum protection with airbag equipped automobiles.

NEWS

YOU CAN USE

NHTSA Releases Drowsy Driving Materials

As part of its increased focus on drowsy driving, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has released two new publications. *Drowsy Driving and Automobile Crashes* presents the results of a literature review and recommendations from the Expert Panel on Driver Fatigue and Sleepiness organized by the National Center on Sleep Disorders Research. The publication is a comprehensive review of what the health and traffic safety communities currently know about the issue of drowsy driving and its prevention.

The second publication, *Safe Driving Tips*, is an informational brochure that includes tips on how to prevent drowsy driving before and after someone gets on the highway, as well as how to recognize fatigue symptoms. Other issues covered in the brochure include aggressive driving, older drivers, and anti-lock brake systems.

Both publications can be obtained by calling NHTSA at (202) 366-0123 or via the NHTSA web site at www.nhtsa.dot.gov.

Single-Vehicle Crashes are Number One Killer of Truck Drivers

A new report from the University of Michigan Transportation Research Institute reveals that two-thirds of truck driver fatalities are in single-vehicle crashes. Over half of these crashes are rollovers. The study analyzed data from 1980 to 1994 that consisted of nearly 75,000 trucks involved in fatal crashes. From the years 1991 to 1994, 550 truck drivers were killed in highway crashes. Twenty-seven percent of these crashes involved a truck driver running into a fixed object. Ejection was also a significant cause of a driver's death in 32 percent of the cases. Single-vehicle, single-occupant crashes, where the person strikes a stationary object, are classic fall-asleep crashes. For a copy of the report, write to: UMTRI Research Review, University of Michigan, Transportation Research Institute, 2901 Baxter Rd., Ann Arbor, MI 48109-2150